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AP INTERVIEW

DCI
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1300 hours

We have offered to have this interview because all of us, all of the American Intelligence Community, are gravely concernef about damage being done to our intelligence capabilities by unauthorized disclosures of sensitive information. We have already lost capabilities critical to protecting innocent civilians, personnel and embassies and other installations overseas from terrorist attacks. We can tell you that there are many, many of us in the Intelligence Community who fear that if we do not establish greater discipline over the flow of sensitive information to the whole world we will no longer have an adequate intelligence agency. That's what we are to talk about.

Over recent years we have spent billions of dollars and trained thousands of splendid people to restore the finest intelligence service in the world. Yet every method we have of acquiring intelligence -- our agents, our relationships with other intelligence services, our photographic, electronic, and communications tracking capabilities -- has been damaged as disclosures of sensitive information enables our adversaries to defeat our growing capabilities.

Stories in both the print and electronic media have shown, sometimes in great detail, how to counter capabilities in which we have invested billions of dollars and many years of creative talent and effort. This, time and time again, has enabled those hostile to us to abort huge investments, to conceal and otherwise deny us information critical to our defense, and to deprive us of the ability to protect our citizens from terrorist attack. Leakers are costing the taxpayers millions and even billions of dollars -- and, more important, putting Americans abroad as well as our country itself at risk.

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Certainly our nation cannot permit this to continue to occur. To do so would be to undercut our national security, personal safety and hopes for arms control and our efforts to establish and maintain peace in the world.

What we hope to get out of this interview is not headlines or an exciting story but a sober analysis of what is at stake in this issue and how it can be addressed without infringing on the essential role of the media in providing the public the information it needs for the self government of our nation. We would first like to establish that we yield to no one in our admiration for the diligence and ingenuity of the working press in gathering and publishing news. We applaud its exposure of waste, inefficiency, corruption and other misconduct. We hope to reduce the level of intensity of the charges by providing every assurance that we are not out to undercut the First Amendment or muzzle the press.

What we are talking about here is not malfeasance, wrong doing, waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement. We are talking about unique fragile sources of information that enable the United States to protect itself in a very unfriendly world. There have been no allegations that these collection activities have been mismanaged or that any wrong doing has been involved. The only reason that they are being revealed in the press is because they are sensational. As a nation we are paying a heavy price for such sensationalism.

We believe a great many journalists and others in the media recognize that the nation has a problem which must be dealt with responsibly. It is essential to differentiate between the very serious damage done to the nation's security through the publication of leaked sensitive intelligence and the need for the American public to possess as much information as

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possible to make informed judgments about the conduct of the government's business.

The publisher of The Washington Post recently cited an example of the kind of damage which we have sustained, telling how a television network and a columnist had obtained information that we were reading the messages of people arranging the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. Shortly after this public disclosure, that traffic stopped. This undermined our efforts to capture the terrorist leaders and eliminated a source of information about future attacks. This has happened too often since then. It has cut off overnight our access to Libyan terrorist planning to attack U.S. citizens and facilities.

The Publisher of The Washington Post stated correctly the responsibility of the media in such matters in her recent talk. She called for "...full cooperation wherever possible between the media and the authorities. When the media obtains especially sensitive information, we are willing to tell the authorities what we have learned and what we plan to report. And while reserving the right to make the final decision ourselves, we are anxious to listen to arguments about why information should not be aired. (The media) want to do nothing that would endanger human life or national security. We are willing to cooperate with the authorities in withholding information that could have those consequences."

We have been gratified by the readiness of many reporters and editors to carefully consider sometimes withholding publication of information which could jeopardize national interests or to treat or present a story in a manner which meets the public need, yet minimizes potential damage to

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intelligence sources. The trick is to recognize the potential for damage to consult on how it might be minimized. We are always ready and available on short notice to help on that and we are prepared to intensify this kind of cooperation.

We recognize that the first line of defense and the most effective way of preventing these types of leaks is to increase discipline within the government itself. The inability to control sensitive information is destructive of the morale of people who do keep secrets, as well as damaging to our security. During the last several years, the President has emphasized the special obligation federal workers have to protect the classified information with which they are entrusted. We have increased and must intensify our efforts to uncover those who violate this trust. We are studying procedures and possibly new laws needed to deal with federal employees who decide on their own to disclose classified information.

We ask that the press work with the American Intelligence Community and the other national security organizations in protecting this nation's legitimate secrets. Some organizations and individual journalists already do. We strongly encourage the other members of the press to do so too.

There can be freedom of the press and a sensitivity by the press to the need to protect military, diplomatic and intelligence activities that defend this nation. The nation can have both freedom and security, but without security it will have no freedom.

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